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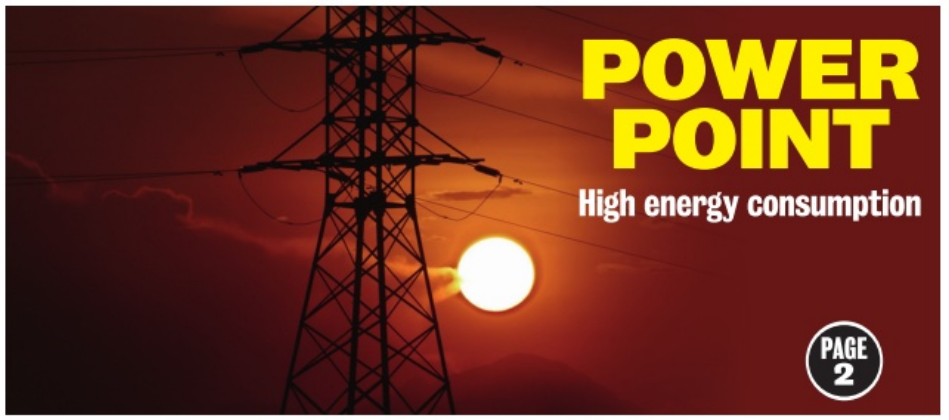
Bangalore Mirror

TEMP Max 28 | Min 16 | Humidity 55% Generally cloudy sky Sensex 60,840 | Nifty 18,105 | Gold 54,972 | Silver 69,370 | Dollar 82.75 | Euro 88.76 | GBP 100.11



POWER POINT

High energy consumption

PAGE 2

TRIP HOP

Take the tech route

PAGE 7

BBMP's technical vigilance cell weakened after chief commissioner assigned to decide on probes into public complaints, allege activists

CELL DIVISION

TVCC formed in 2006 to ensure quality in developmental works

| Y Maheswara Reddy
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TWEETS @BangaloreMIRROR

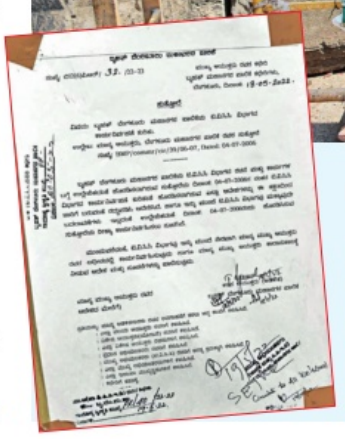
A circular directing the Technical Vigilance Cell under Commissioner (TVCC) to report to the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) chief commissioner continues to draw mixed responses from social activists and residents. The circular was issued by the BBMP deputy commissioner (administration) on May 18, 2022.

While the circular received flak from social activists, some of the BBMP engineers welcomed the circular stating that it will ensure the TVCC focuses on inspection of the developmental works based on 'genuine complaints from media and concerned citizens'.

However, social activists claimed the circular has 'inactivated' the TVCC by giving absolute power to the BBMP chief commissioner to decide whether or not to refer a complaint to the TVCC for investigation or inquiry.

"I doubt the intention or objective of the circular because the BBMP chief commissioner may not refer complaints raised by the public to the TVCC on poor quality of developmental works due to

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6 »



"It will be better if TVCC chief engineer is empowered to take decisions independently instead of waiting for chief commissioner's directive..."

– Sai Datta, social activist

Tours & travels miss cash

Ticket payments made cashless during covid yet to be rolled back

| Melvin Mathew
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TWEETS @BangaloreMIRROR

As tourism hits pre-covid levels, tourists and tourist guides want the old cash-based transaction system reinstated. During covid, ticket payments had to be made online; these are yet to be rolled back.

Tourist guides complained that tourist locations in Bangalore Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) circle do not facilitate cash-based transactions for ticketing.

Currently, the process involves standing in a queue and making payments after registering the tourists on the online platform. The process is time-consuming and leads to delays in itineraries, they said. They demand officials reinstate the transitional ticket counters and simplify the process for both tourists and tourist guides.

"We have to stand in long queues to book tickets for tourist locations in Bangalore circle. It has been causing inconvenience for the tourists as well as tourist guides. The issue does not seem to exist in other circles. Officials should bring back cash-based transactions," said Pradeep, a tourist guide.

Some of the prominent tourist locations in the Bangalore circle include Somnathpur Temple and Tipu Sultan's Palaces in Bengaluru and Mysuru.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6 »

3 THINGS TO DO

01 On classical beats

The 13th Nirantharam national music and dance festival is a five day celebration of a variety of classical music and dance performances. Presented by Sangeetha Sambhrama the festival will feature a colourful dance ballet depicting the life of Vidya Sundari Bangalore Nagaratnamma followed by Bharatanatyam and Kuchipudi.
Where: Seva Sadan, Malleswaram
When: January 1 to 5

02 Adding smiles

Free mega Jaipur foot camp is back. The 25th edition of the camp is providing free fitment for 850- limbs, 950- calipers, 750- crutches and 50- wheelchairs. Organised by Bhagwan Mahaveer Viklang Sahayatha Samiti (BMVSS), there's free food and accomodation provided for outstation beneficiaries. **Where: Rotary Bangalore Peenya**
When: January 3 to 9

03 Colourful play

Based on the bestselling book- 'The day the Crayons Quit', this play is about how all the crayons in a box are protesting about a common problem and now they decide to quit. This is a wonderful chance for your kids to watch the visual and musical elements brought alive through a play. **Where: Jus Trufs Chocolatiers**
When: Saturday, January 7

Powerful winter this year

Electricity requirement increases following good rainfall in Karnataka; as of now nothing to worry as supply is more than demand, says official

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Karnataka had generated 49,032.98 million units of power from April to December 2022. Industrial activities have also picked up after covid lull, which is adding to the power demand

Surprisingly, the power demand in the state has shot up even during winter. According to sources, the current demand is said to be around 12,500 megawatts (MW). During the previous year, the demand was in the range of 11,300 MW during the same time. An all time peak demand was witnessed during March 2022 when the demand had shot up to 14,766 MW.

According to officials, it was common to witness demand peaking in summer in the range of 13,000 to 14,000 MW.

"There are multiple reasons for the increase in power demand during the current months. One of the main reasons is due to the increased usage of pump sets which are drawing excess power. The farmers have started sowing activities following good rainfall in the north east monsoon," said an official. "Secondly, the industrial activities have also picked up after covid lull which is adding to the power demand. Thirdly, many commercial establishments have been using lighting arrangements to attract customers," he added.

"For the last two years, the business sentiment was down but this year, there has been a renewed interest for New Year which has also added to the power demand," he explained.

However, officials said that there is nothing to worry about, as of now the supply is more than the demand. Currently, 3,500 MW of power is generated in the state from multiple sources including thermal, hydroelectric, wind and solar.

Power generation

Meanwhile, Karnataka had generated 49,032.98 million units (MU) of power from April to December 2022. According to data provided by Energy Minister V Sunil Kumar in the recent session, 8,853.41 MU was generated from hydroelectric sources, 11,040.58 MU from thermal, 4.588 MU from wind, 25.17 MU from solar, 9,099.79 MU from central grid and the rest from private players and other sources.

Among the hydro electric sources, Sharavati had contributed 3,369.36 MU, Linganamakki 154.31 MU, Bhadra 70.235 MU, Nagjhari 2,010.99 MU, Supa 207.79 MU, Varahi 826.34 MU, Mani 9.63 MU, Ghataprabha 50.814 MU, Kadra 289.09 MU, Kodasalli 264.63 MU, Gerusoppa 379.81 MU, Almatti 520.97 MU and Shivanasamudra 190.78 MU.

> **"One of the main reasons for increase in power demand in state is due to the increased usage of pump sets by the farmers**
> – an official

During the recent session, Kumar said, "We have a long standing agreement with thermal power generation companies. Hence, we have to pay fixed prices to them. Besides, there are other cost factors like revision of salaries, increase in maintenance cost, investments and payment of interests. Due to these factors, the power prices keep going up though the price revision is determined by Karnataka Electricity Regulatory Commission (KERC)."

FAC revision

Meanwhile, in a latest order, KERC has revised the fuel adjustment charges (FAC) for the next quarter. In the last quarter that ended in December, Bangalore Electricity Supply Company Limited (BESCOM) consumers had to pay 43 paise as FAC. However, from the next quarter (January to March, 2023), the consumers will pay 37 paise per unit. Consumers are now hoping for minor relief in power bills.

Academic goals: BCU for law college

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Bangalore City University (BCU) is planning to introduce the five-year integrated undergraduate law course in the coming academic year.

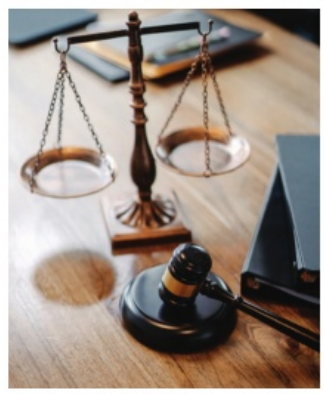
Along with that, the university is also looking to establish a separate college of law in the future. Lingaraja Gandhi, the Vice Chancellor of the University, told Bangalore Mirror that the proposal to start the five-year integrated law course has been sent. BCU always had a law college and he wants to revive that.

"The proposal has been sent to the Bar Council of India (BCI) and we are awaiting a reply on the same. The posts have already been sanctioned. We already have a department of law and public policy, and we will be renaming that as the college of law and introducing the five-year integrated law course," he said.

Along with these, the university will also be introducing more short-term certificate courses for technological courses as well.

"Last year we introduced the department of technology at BCU. Under the same department we will be offering many more diploma and certificate courses for the students, not necessarily 4-year programmes," he added.

"Short courses are in great demand these days, especially courses like machine learning, artificial intelligence, and data analytics. They will be introduced in the department of technology in the academic year 2023-34," he explained.



The university is also looking forward to starting a department for sports science as the interest in sports is increasing among the students.

"Sports are in great demand along with yoga and other activities. So we are planning to introduce more certificate and diploma courses along these lines along with the physical education degree courses. We will be submitting the proposal for this soon that will be included in the budget estimate. It will be submitted to the government in February," he further added. The courses will be introduced by the month of July and the university students will have access to most of these new courses in the coming academic year 2023-24.

Debris on our walkway!

Path around Kasavanahalli Lake blocked by mounds of construction debris and garbage

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Once upon a time, visitors to Kasavanahalli Lake, would have a good walk around the lake on the walkway -- but that is turning into a distant memory now. The walkway now has no space for walkers as it is filled with construction debris and garbage, which is not only inconveniencing them but also spoiling the beauty of the lake and the area.

The residents of areas nearby said this has been the case for more than two years. And so far, not a finger has been moved to remove the debris.

Aastha Gokhle, one such resident, told BM, "The walkway is meant for walking but the construction debris and garbage all over makes it very difficult to walk around the area. The debris narrows down the walking space. There should be strict supervision to clear this debris and stop people from throwing garbage on this walkway."

Sunitha K, another resident of the area, said as the lake is unsupervised, people come there just to throw garbage. "There should be strict penalties for people who are making the area dirty and spoiling the overall beauty of the area. Even the construction debris should be cleared off as it is taking up our walking space."

The residents also said that strict measures should be taken to make sure no one dumps construction debris or any garbage in the area.

Anjana Kumar, another resident of the area, said, "The authorities can deploy guards in the area so that no one is allowed to dump any kind of garbage or construction debris on the walkway. They should also install CCTV cameras in the area so that the people who are doing this can be recognised and penalised. Unless some strict measures are taken, the offenders will not learn and these kinds of activities will continue."

The residents also say that the quality of the lake water has been deteriorating because of sewage entering it.

Ashwin Srinivas, another resident of the area, said, "The lake has been receiving sewage for a very long time and this has been affecting its water quality severely. Authorities must take immediate action to arrest the entry of sewage otherwise, this lake will perish soon."

Karan Thakur, another resident staying nearby, spoke about instances of frothing in the lake. "Despite that no action was taken. If nothing is done soon then whatever aquatic life is present in the lake will not survive."

BBMP officials, meanwhile, assured BM that the area would be inspected soon.

Jumbo attack: Forest watcher killed in Nagarahole

A forest watcher with the Nagarahole national park was killed when a wild elephant attacked him.

The deceased, identified as Mahadevaswamy (35) along with three others were driving a herd of wild elephants out of some agricultural fields when one of the elephants charged at the forest guards.

While the forest guards ran back, a tusker attacked Mahadevaswamy and Rajesh. Mahadevaswamy succumbed to his injuries while Rajesh, who suffered injuries, is recovering at a hospital near Nagarahole national park.

Deputy Conservator of Forests, C Harshkumar while speaking to the media persons, said that the elephants were in the periphery of the forests and attacked the forest watcher quite unexpectedly.

The elephant herd had reached an agriculture field late Saturday night when the forest department was alerted and a group of forest watchers reached the spot to drive the elephants out of the field.

While the forest guards were engaged in driving the elephants out of the farm, one elephant charged at the forest guards attacking Mahadevasami and injuring him grievously leading to his death. **-IANS**

Body of newborn found in garbage

The body of a newborn was found in a garbage bin in front of the Gavi Gangadhareshwara Swamy Temple, 5th Main Road, Chamarajpet.

The infant boy had been thrown into the bin in front of the temple, wrapped in a saree. The body was found in the morning, when the cleaning staff came to work as usual. After checking, it was established that the baby was dead.

The cleaning staff immediately informed the BBMP marshal team and they informed the police. As soon as the matter came to light, the police came to the spot and conducted an investigation. Later, the body of the child was sent to the local hospital in an ambulance. **BMB**

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HAPPY New Year 2023

Widening resumes on Hebbal flyover!

BDA commences work on Hebbal flyover after seven-year gap

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The widening of the Hebbal flyover is estimated to cost the BDA Rs 80 crore and work is expected to be completed in 12 months; work to widen the flyover had begun in 2018, only to be halted in 2019 (File photo)

After a seven-year delay, the much-needed widening of Hebbal flyover finally began on Sunday. Bangalore North MP DV Sadananda Gowda launched the project in the presence of BDA chairman SR Vishwanath and Hebbal MLA Byrathi Suresh, BDA Commissioner Kumar Naik, and other officials.

"The work has been pending for a long time. I want to appreciate BDA Chairman and Yelahanka MLA Vishwanath for clearing the hurdles for the same. Motorists used to struggle a lot to commute on the flyover during peak hours," said Suresh.

The project was delayed due to objections from the Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) as it wanted to construct the airport line that connects Nagawara Junction to Yelahanka via Hebbal flyover. The BMRCL reportedly wrote a letter on December 14 to the BDA stating that the latter could go ahead with the first phase of the widening.

The widening of the flyover will cost the BDA around Rs 80 crore and work is expected to be completed in 12 months.

"We have decided to add two more lanes to the flyover (from the city to towards the airport) and construct one more lane from Tumakuru Road side connecting to the flyover to ensure smooth movement of vehicles. Construction of the underpass will be taken up after completing widening," said BDA Engineer Member Dr HR Shantharajanna.

He said the extra lane to be constructed from the Tumakuru Road side towards the airport would be useful for vehicles coming from KR Puram, heading towards the airport. This ramp of the newly constructed traffic lane will be extended up to the bus shelter opposite Esteem Mall, he said.

The widening of Hebbal flyover, proposed in 2016, was halted due to the proposal to construct the steel flyover between Chalukya Circle and Esteem Mall in 2017.

> **"The work has been pending for a long time. Motorists used to struggle a lot to commute on the flyover during peak hours** – MLA SR Vishwanath

The widening began in 2018, only to be halted in October 2019 when the BMRCL assigned Rail India Technical and Economic Service (RITES) to conduct a study on the augmentation capacity of the flyover.

Residents of Hebbal and surrounding areas, especially motorists, have welcomed the BDA's decision to commence the widening work once again. "It was very tough for motorists to use this flyover during the peak hours. My suggestion is to construct one more flyover vertically to reduce the density of vehicles on the existing flyover as the authorities concerned cannot go on widening the road or flyover once in 10 or 15 years," said Suresh Kumar, a resident of Sahakaranagar.

Meanwhile, HM Venkatesh, a resident from Judicial Layout, opined that the BDA has taken up the work because of state assembly elections scheduled this year. "It is an election stunt. The BDA has not maintained any flyover constructed by them," he said.

54 deep cuts leave citizens hurt

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The Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) has started the road widening project at Bellary Road from Mekhri Circle to Kaveri Circle for which they had cut down 54 trees. However, environmentalists and plant lovers in the city are upset over the trees being felled.

BBMP officials say that widening the road will help with smooth traffic movement along the 600-m-long stretch. BS Prahlad, Chief Engineer (Road and Infrastructure), BBMP, said, "It is a conscious and evaluated project. The Mehkri Circle underpass is a three-lane road and the road after Kaveri Circle is, again, a three-lane road. Hence, the stretch between the road is narrow and creates a bottleneck. Even if the traffic movement is slow, it should not be congested. But in that stretch, traffic movement is getting congested. The road widening project will help with uniform movement of traffic throughout."

The initial plan was to extend the road widening project till Palace Grounds, and for that, 172 trees had to be cut down, but after reconsidering, the Palike decided not to go so far, informed Prahlad. Instead of 172 trees, they ended up axing 58 trees. "People will see the results of road widening soon as the work has already started. It is set to be completed within the next 15 to 20 days. Moreover, we have started replanting the trees," he added. Tree lovers and environmentalists, however, are unhappy about this.

Abhijith Aniruddh, a city-based environmentalist, told Bangalore mirror that cutting of the trees will have a detrimental effect. There will be an increase in the temperature in the place as there will be nothing to absorb the carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, he said, adding that it will even lead to an increase of air pollution in the area.

Amina Ashraf, a resident of the area, told BM, "Even after multiple protests we could not save the trees. It is true that they will be planting trees again, but it will take a lot of time for them to grow as big as the trees that were cut. Moreover, the trees on this road stood as a symbol of tree conservation."

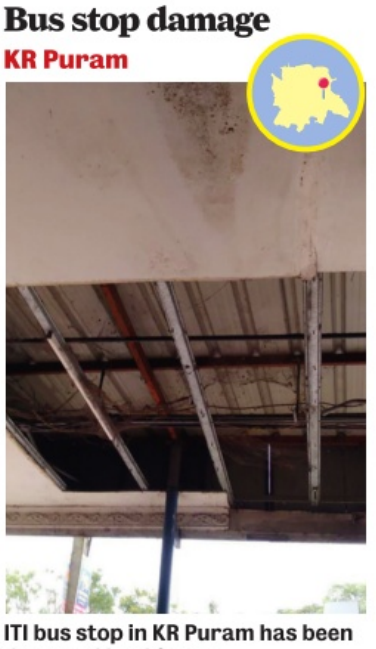
whatsapp MIRROR 9591233247

Problems in your area?
Send us a picture along with specific details. And please, no phone calls or spamming

Incomplete work
Benson town

Work in Benson Town has been left incomplete. A broken electric pole has been lying on slabs for a month in a nearby area.

Bus stop damage
KR Puram



ITI bus stop in KR Puram has been damaged by thieves.

Garbage dumping
Thimmaiah Road

Garbage is being dumped on the roadside in Thimmaiah Road, Vasanth Nagar, opposite KSFC Bhavan.

ABOUT NEW YEAR'S EVE

Pubs revel in post-covid glory

NYE brings profits to businesses after 2 years; citizens lax about covid norms

Saumyangi Yadav & Iffath Fathima
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It was a profitable new year's eve for businesses around Bengaluru after two years of muted celebrations. Restaurant and pub owners say that they saw a good crowd.

PC Rao, president of Bruhat Bengaluru Hotel Association, said that a revenue of Rs 200 crore by excise collection is expected just for the night of December 31.

"Every other day the excise revenue is close to Rs 100 crore, but it was double for NYE night. Although people got only one hour of celebration since the restaurants and pubs closed at 1 am, it was still a great night for businesses," he told BM.

According to the data, liquor sales in the city have seen an increase of 14.86 per cent compared to the corresponding period last year. The state recorded sales of Indian Made Liquor (IML) and beer worth Rs 1,262 crore since December 23, 2022, excluding the sales on new year's eve. However, the excise revenue during this period has dipped and is about Rs 657 crore as against Rs 736 crore collected last year.

Covid norms not followed

On the other hand, despite the health department issuing guidelines for mandatory face masking, social distancing, and screening of temperature, none of the guidelines were followed.

"I was in Church Street with my friends and there were thousands of people. The entire street was packed and cops were there as well, but their emphasis was more on traffic management than checking covid norms. Almost no one was wearing masks," said Supriya Mehta, 24.

> **"Every other day the excise revenue is close to Rs 100 crore, but it was double for NYE night despite establishments shuting by 1 am**
> – PC Rao, president, Bruhat Bengaluru Hotel Association

People who went to star hotels painted a similar picture. Akash Mehrotra, a guest who had attended the party at XU Bar at The Leela Palace, said, "We had booked tickets for a party at Leela, but our experience was extremely disappointing. The hotel management and staff had failed to follow any covid and hygiene protocols. People had thrown up all over the floor and contaminated food was being served. Almost everyone was partying without their masks and the hotel did not take any proactive measures to enforce norms."

Niharika Kapoor, another guest at the same event, said, "No covid prevention and hygiene measures were taken. Also, the sweets section had no serving spoon, and people were contaminating food with their bare hands. It was a total waste of our time and money and we left quickly."

Sherin CM, a resident of ITI Layout, alleged that places hosting parties did not follow any covid measures. Guests were reportedly allowed in without masks. "People who went to places like Social, Byg Brewski, Meraj, ITC Windsor Manor complained of no norms being followed. I visited ITC Windsor Manor with my nine-month-old son and did not see any safety norms being followed."

Lathi charge in Koramangala

Bengaluru saw chaotic new year festivities on Saturday as police used lathi charge on people.

A sizable crowd had gathered across several locations in the city for NYE celebrations. According to the police, one such gathering became out of control and they used lathi charge to disperse people in Koramangala.

Social media posts showed images and videos of hundreds of people swarming the streets. There were a lot of police officers present as well. Videos shared by people show partygoers hurrying to leave as cops approach them. Police had previously sent out a warning to the residents. In a tweet, Bengaluru City Police Commissioner Pratap Reddy advised people to remain in places with fewer people if they were going out to celebrate. He continued by saying that if they see an area is crowded, they should leave. **–BMB**

Drunk man stabs friend

A man stabbed his friend on new year's eve in a state of intoxication. A case has been registered in Peenya police station against the accused who has been identified as Prasant, according to the police.

"During the new year party, the accused got drunk and stabbed his friend with a knife. Fortunately, the victim is alive and the accused has been arrested," said the police. **–BMB**

This NYE saw responsible drivers

On new year's eve, Bengaluru Traffic Police (BTP) usually expects a surge in drunken driving cases. However, this year, there were only 78 cases. This has been a drop in comparison to the previous year and the BTP gave credit to the people who drove responsibly.

Ahead of the Christmas and New Year celebrations, the traffic police started random drunken driving checks and asked people to stay cautious. During a special drive of such checks, over 146 city dwellers were booked on December 23. The BTP's aim was to reduce accidents in the city during NYE. Many speeding cases, drunken driving cases, and even fatal accidents are reported every year on December 31 night.

> **Traffic police registered only 78 cases this December 31, a considerable dip from last year**

Such violations were extremely low this year with hardly any accidents reported.

BTP Special Commissioner, MA Saleem, said, "There were only 78 cases of drunken driving. These are very less in number in comparison to the previous years. In central areas, no such drivers were booked as there was a huge crowd and the roads were congested. The police had to regulate traffic movement and didn't check on drunken driving cases. But in the outskirts and other areas where it was checked, only 78 cases were registered."

He further added that citizens were largely responsible this time. "As we had even carried out special drives earlier, people were much aware. Many friends who weren't drunk took charge of driving. Many even chose to book cabs. The traffic as well was well managed and there were no mishaps," he said.

A Halasuru traffic police official said that they had conducted awareness drives ahead of NYE and warned people of strict action if they were caught driving while drunk. The strict enforcement resulted in a very low number of cases, he said.

Nishreen M, a resident of Frazer Town, said that the traffic was very well managed in places like Indiranagar and Koramangala. "Although there was congestion, the BTP managed well to ensure there was movement of vehicles," Nishreen added.

–Iffath Fathima

Man falls to death in Kamakshipalya

A young man died after falling from a building during a new year party in Bengaluru.

Bapi, a native of Odisha, fell down from the third floor of a building while trying to cross from one building to another.

The deceased Bapi was working in a cotton manufacturing factory. The incident took place in Kamakshipalya police station.

"The deceased and his friends broke a window to get between the two buildings. Yesterday, he went to the terrace of the building through that window. Later, Bapi and his friends went to the terrace and brought cake to cut it. But before cutting the cake, Bapi, who was intoxicated, fell down from the building and died," said the police. **–BMB**

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All charged up, to hit the highway

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Seems like this will be the year when electric vehicles get the push they have been craving for. The Bangalore Electricity Supply Company (BESCOM) has planned a project to install electric vehicle charging stations on the Bengaluru-Pune National Highway stretch which will benefit many EV users.

BESCOM will initiate the pilot project of setting up EV charging stations and has given a proposal to the National Highway Authority of India (NHAI). Charging stations will come along toll plazas of the Bengaluru-Pune stretch (NH-48). The authorities are preparing a plan and recently met the NHAI authorities for their approval.

BESCOM Managing Director Mahantesh Bilagi said, "A pilot project along toll plazas of NH-48 is being prepared. The pilot project aims to set up EV fast charging stations at 10 toll plazas within Karnataka. Two EV charging stations are proposed at each toll plaza and they will be equipped with 120 KW CCS2 EV fast chargers."

Bilagi added that this charging station plan near highways will boost the EV infrastructure in the state. "Many electric vehicle owners are worried about travelling long distances in the EVs as they are worried that their battery would run out. By installing the charging stations, more people will adapt to using electric vehicles."

In November-end, NHAI had asked BESCOM to submit a proposal for a pilot. On December 22, the proposal was submitted to NHAI and BESCOM is now waiting for the final approval.

Bilagi added that sales of electric vehicles in the past has increased significantly. "More stations will encourage more motorists to shift to environment-friendly, battery-run vehicles. As the NH 48 is among the longer routes, we decided to install charging stations on the stretch. The entire cost will be taken care of by BESCOM," he said.

Recently, the Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways, Nitin Gadakari announced that the Centre has provisioned for 137 charging stations to be installed on the highways.

BESCOM is said to be the first nodal agency to have introduced charging stations in the country, as it believes as more people adopt the use of electric vehicles, the demand for charging stations has gone up.

Why tourism needs cash transactions

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Another tourist guide, Phaneesh told BM that after reaching the venue, they have to enter the names of people along with other details while issuing tickets through the online platform.

"There is no facility to use credit/debit cards either. The process is putting a lot of hardship on tourist guides. In Somnathpur, we struggle with network coverage while making these transactions. The whole process has become cumbersome, especially with larger groups. At a stretch, only four members can be added to a group. Foreign tourists who come to visit these locations on tight schedules complain of not being able to find time to visit all places on the itinerary," Phaneesh said.

Another tourist guide noted that sometimes it takes nearly an hour for the process to be completed. "Foreigners without guides find it very difficult. They struggle to make payments through the online medium and eventually guides help them out. Since the covid outbreak, ticketing counters have been non-functional in the ASI Bengaluru circle. Other circles are working quite conveniently," said a tourist guide.

An ASI official told BM that they have already written to the head office for bringing back ticketing counters.

"We are planning to reinstate ticketing counters soon. We are already working on it and have written to the head office in Delhi. Our existing staff will be looking after the ticketing counters. However, the current process is not too cumbersome; it hardly takes 2-3 minutes to book tickets," said the senior official.

NOTES FROM THE FIELD

RV Deshpande was given best legislator award recently

Retirement politics

During the Assembly session, leader of opposition Siddaramaiah suggested to his party MLA RV Deshpande that he retire from politics soon. The statement caught everyone in the House by surprise. When Speaker Vishweshwar Hegde Kageri asked Siddaramaiah to clarify himself, he told the Speaker that he need not worry (as both Kageri and Deshpande hail from Uttara Kannada). He later told Deshpande he could retire whenever but it would be better if he does so after the 2023 Assembly elections.

Daredevil act

A middle-aged man from Kolkata was bitten by a snake near Chikkamagaluru railway station recently. Instead of wanting to rush to the hospital, the first thing he did was to catch a snake to take it to the hospital. Media too reached the hospital where the man told them he had got the snake along as the doctors would ask which snake had bitten him.

Mask up & drink

When a section of pub owners opposed the State Government mandating masks for NY revellers, Revenue Minister R Ashoka responded that masks were being supplied by corporates as part of CSR. In his eagerness to explain, the minister even claimed that these days there are masks that allow one to drink even when a person is masked up.

Age matters

Byatarayanapura MLA Krishna Byre Gowda recently surprised everyone when he told the Assembly that he suspected Siddaramaiah's birth certificate was not genuine!

Before people could make wild speculations, Gowda explained it was because the enthusiasm of Siddaramaiah belies his age. How can a 75-year-old man be so active? he asked. Speaker Vishweshwar Hegde Kageri said if the Congress MLA wishes to know the truth, he was ready to order for an inquiry about the birth certificate in question.

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I, Manoj Deep Patel T S/o Thimmayaragowda R/o 124/a, 1st Cross, Thammanayakana halli, Anekal, Bangalore have changed my name to Manoj Deep Patel for all purposes.

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Circular evokes mixed response

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

reasons best known to him. It will be better if the chief engineer of the TVCC is empowered to take decisions independently instead of waiting for the BBMP chief commissioner's directive to conduct an inquiry into the complaints from the public," said social activist Sai Datta.

The TVCC was formed in 2006 to ensure quality in developmental works taken up by the BBMP. Later, the TVCC's scope was expanded to auditing bills submitted by contractors after completing assigned works.

Till the circular issued on May 18, 2022, the TVCC used to report to the special commissioner (projects). As per the circular, the TVCC has been reporting to the BBMP chief commissioner. It is expected to conduct surprise inspections of 10% of randomly selected works to ensure quality.

Former KAS officer K Mathai, who had a brief stint as assistant commissioner (advertisement) at the BBMP, is of the view that BBMP head office is a den of corruption. "At least the TVCC is expected to work independently to check the quality of developmental works. Bringing the TVCC under direct supervision of the chief commissioner is a bad decision and will only help in deepening the corruption further," said Mathai.

Meanwhile, retired chief engineer of the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) and chairman of JD(S) technical wing and spokesperson of Bangalore District, SM Basavaraj felt that bringing the TVCC under the BBMP chief commissioner's control is a good initiative.

"It will avoid the TVCC chief engineer wasting time by going through all types of complaints. This initiative will also avoid the so-called RTI activists. It will enable the BBMP chief commissioner and the TVCC chief engineer to take decisions without wasting time. I also want the BBMP chief commissioner to take action against those responsible for poor quality work without any fear or favour. He has to ensure transparency in the inspection of the developmental works based on complaints received from the public and take measures to avoid loss to the BBMP," said Basavaraj.

Meanwhile, TVCC chief engineer Vijaykumar Haridas told BM that the cell has been functioning effectively after the issuance of the circular directing it to report to the BBMP chief commissioner.

"All these years, the general public used to think that the TVCC was a redundant department of the BBMP. It used to receive a number of complaints from so-called RTI activists with vested interests. Now, we are focusing on genuine complaints referred by the BBMP chief commissioner."

HERE'S LOOKING AT YOU, 2023

On day 2 of New Year, we wrap up our city wishlist with three issues we wonder about

Smooth ride: BMTC to take tech route

BMTC plans to implement completely integrated intelligent transportation system to attract riders and improve revenue

Melvin Mathew
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TWEETS @BangaloreMIRROR

By incorporating digitalisation this year, BMTC plans on increasing ridership and revenue.

The automatic fare collection system (AFCS) will be integrated with the ITS. By next year, BMTC would have improved upon the ITS involving launching of the completely integrated BMTC app allowing provision for electronic, digital and card-based ticketing. Additionally, passengers will be able to track buses in real-time and bus stops might get display boards akin to airports.

Buses will also be equipped with GPS systems, panic buttons and CCTVs to improve women's safety. Through the control unit, rash driving of BMTC buses will be closely monitored.

Starting next year, ticket payments are expected to become completed digitally. Passengers will be able to pay digitally using UPI, Credit and Debit cards. QR codes and pre-paid tickets through BMTC's app Nimbus will be launched in 2023. BMTC is proposing increasing routes in the city. They are now planning to run Vayu Vajra buses in suburban areas like Chikkaballapur, Ramanagara, Kolar etc. They also plan on running more feeder services within CBD areas for last-mile connectivity, said an official.

After Covid, BMTC has been struggling with passengers making the shift to private transport. They are experiencing a difference of 5 lakh and also experiencing competition with Metro over ridership, Hence, BMTC will be tying up with Metro to meet last-mile connectivity BMTC will also pay heed to public demand for increasing schedules and more buses.

BMTC may tie up with the traffic police to promote public transport. As it has insufficient crew members, BMTC will focus on utilising the existing crew efficiently.

"BMTC has approached companies like Ashok Leyland and Tata Motors to conduct massive-scale skill development for its conductors, drivers, and officers. The corporation is planning to hire 1000 crew members and has given the proposal to the state government," explained an official.

Sources said that BMTC is also planning to seek CSR funds from close associates to aid the corporation in areas such as human resource management, civic engineering, skill development, etc.

"Next year, BMTC will be giving student passes through the Seva Sindhu portal. Plans are in progress to provide free-destination passes for students moving from the Point A to Point B pass system right now. This is being issued for students within the age group of 6-18 years," said an official.

BMTC has given the proposal to the state government to provide Rs 700-800 crore for the proposal. In addition, BMTC will be addressing viability gaps, especially with electric buses by seeking government help.

Suburban railways may get going

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A little over six months ago, the foundation stone for the suburban rail project was laid down by none other than Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The PM, during the event, promised that the much-awaited rail infrastructure will become a reality in 40 months. However, rail activists say, the project is yet to get the required push for it to become operational in 34 months from now. However, officials say that there will be forward movement on the suburban railway this year.

According to mobility experts in the city, the biggest challenge Bengaluru faces today is traffic congestion. And the only practical solution to the problem is strengthening public transport.

While preliminary work on the Baiyappanahalli-Chikkabanavara line of the suburban rail has been initiated, rail activists say the way forward for the project in the new year should be to carry out the work at war footing.

"K-RIDE officials must take up the challenge of completing the work as promised by the Prime Minister. All four corridors of the project must be completed by December 2025. We have already lost 26 months since the project got approval from the central government. K-RIDE must float tenders for all corridors immediately. Work should be done at a war footing and with full support from the state government. Suburban rail project must get the same freedom that BMRCL enjoys," said Rajkumar Dugar, founder, Citizen for Citizen (C4C).

Citizens and rail activists say that the corridor is in line with the Central government's GatiShakti project of cheap and multi-modal connectivity to important locations in the city. Moreover, it will ensure a seamless movement of people in and out of the city center at affordable rates.

However, the demand for priority to the airport corridor still lingers. "The corridor was approved in October 2020 and the government of India gave clear directions to expedite the work on this corridor. The line was expected to be ready by October 2023. The Karnataka government has totally ignored that recommendation. K-RIDE must prioritise this corridor and start the work," said another rail activist.

The suburban rail project has been delayed due to land acquisition issues. In October 2020, the Centre cleared the project with four corridors at a sanctioned cost of Rs. 15,767 crore. The Centre had asked the state government to expedite work on one of the corridors, KSR Bengaluru City – Devanahalli, within three years while giving six years for the rest of the three corridors.

A multi-pronged fight for Vidhana Soudha

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The battle lines are drawn as Karnataka goes to polls this year. All the political parties are gearing up for a multi-pronged contest this time.

Though the previous elections threw up a mixed verdict, leading to Congress and JD(S) forming a coalition government with HD Kumaraswamy being the Chief Minister, the BJP managed to come to power with MLAs switching sides in between. The BJP had two Chief Ministers - BS Yediyurappa and Basavaraj S Bommai, but it looks like a tall task for the saffron party to retain power. Analysts say that there is a strong anti incumbency wave. According to a BJP party functionary, "The BJP's top leaders have set their eyes on Karnataka as it doesn't want to lose the State. Karnataka is the gateway of south for the saffron party and losing Karnataka means the party losing its presence officially in South. So, party seniors are cautious and planning strategies on winning it. One of the important strategies is that we can see the touring of senior leaders led by PM Narendra Modi to the State. In fact, in the last few months, Modi has visited the State to inaugurate big ticket projects and this will only accelerate in coming months."

On the other hand, the Congress is confident that it is in a better position to face the election. In fact, KPCC president DK Shivakumar has said that internal surveys conducted by the party have given them favourable numbers. A political analyst said, "Congress is trying to capitalise on the anti-incumbency wave. This is the reason why the party has increased the campaigns against the ruling BJP in the recent past. The party had a successful Bharat Jodo yatra last year and there was a huge crowd to welcome and join Rahul Gandhi. However, it needs to be seen as to how much of this crowd pulling tactics will actually translate into votes. Another challenge for the Congress party is infighting as there are always rumours of one-upmanship between DKS and Siddaramaiah. Both of them have openly spoken about their ambitions to become the next CM."

No one can ignore the JD(S). If there is a fractured mandate, then JD(S) plays a very crucial role. In fact, HDK who has been CM twice and is now hopeful of getting a majority. HDK has been touring many parts of the State with his Pancharatna yatra. The yatra which is travelling in the old Mysuru region has got a good response from the people so far. HDK has been seeking votes from the people saying that he needs a clear majority to become the next CM. However, the big challenge for JD(S) is to garner votes from north and coastal Karnataka.

Though it has been traditionally a triangular fight in Karnataka, this time, AAP is also throwing its hat into the ring. AAP had a few high-profile entrants but the question is will they be able to get big votes. It remains to be seen if AAP has a presence beyond urban areas.

In 2013, BJP had faced twin challenges from its old companions; Yediyurappa who had formed KJP and B Sriramulu who had launched BSR Congress. This year, the challenge is the new party by G Janardhana Reddy. Party bosses are now calculating to what extent Reddy's party will have an impact in the next elections.

Well, as the countdown for polls begins, everyone is looking at Karnataka with bated breath.

3 killed in Rajouri firing incident
Three people died and seven were injured during the firing incident in the Dangri area of Rajouri by two armed men, Jammu and Kashmir Police said on Sunday

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Demonetisation pleas: SC's verdict today

Court that reopens after break is expected to pronounce 2 separate judgements in pleas against Centre's 2016 move

#New Delhi

The Supreme Court is scheduled to pronounce its judgment on Monday on a batch of pleas challenging the government's 2016 decision to demonetise currency notes of Rs 1,000 and Rs 500 denominations.

A five-judge Constitution bench headed by Justice SA Nazeer, who will retire on January 4, is likely to pronounce its verdict on the matter on January 2, when the top court will reopen after its winter break.

According to Monday's cause list of the top court, there will be two separate judgements in the matter, which will be pronounced by Justices BR Gavai and BV Nagarathna. It is not clear whether the two judgements will be concurring or dissenting. Besides Justices Nazeer, Gavai and Nagarathna, the other members of the five-judge bench are Justices AS Bopanna and V Ramasubramanian. The top court had, on December 7, directed the Centre and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to put on record the relevant records relating to the government's 2016 decision and reserved its verdict.

It heard the arguments of Attorney General R Venkataramani, the RBI's counsel and the petitioners' lawyers, including senior advocates P Chidambaram and Shyam Divan.

Calling the scrapping of the Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 currency notes deeply flawed, Chidambaram had argued that the government cannot on its own initiate any proposal relating to legal tender, which can only be done on the recommendation of the RBI's central board.

The RBI had admitted in its submissions that there were "temporary hardships" in 2016 after demonetisation of some notes

Resisting the apex court's attempt to revisit the 2016 demonetisation exercise, the government had said the court cannot decide a matter when no tangible relief can be granted by way of "putting the clock back" and "unscrambling a scrambled egg".

The RBI had earlier admitted in its submissions that there were "temporary hardships" and that those too are an integral part of the nation-building process, but there was a mechanism by which the problems that arose were solved.

In an affidavit, the Centre told the top court recently that the demonetisation exercise was a "well-considered" decision and part of a larger strategy to combat the menace of fake money, terror financing, black money and tax evasion.

The Supreme Court has heard a batch of 58 petitions challenging the demonetisation exercise announced by the Centre on November 8, 2016.

– PTI

Haryana minister gives up portfolio over sexual harassment charge

#Chandigarh

Haryana minister Sandeep Singh, who has been booked in a sexual harassment case, on Sunday gave up his Sports portfolio, saying he has taken this step on moral grounds. The development came a day after Chandigarh police registered an FIR against the BJP leader on charges of sexual harassment and wrongful confinement on a complaint of a woman junior athletics coach from the state.

Singh, however, has dismissed the accusations as baseless and called for an independent probe.

Meanwhile, the woman coach met Haryana Home Minister Anil Vij, who said justice will be done.

Singh said he has given up the Sports portfolio. A former Olympian and first-time MLA from Pehowa in Kurukshetra, Singh also holds the Printing and Stationery Department. He, however, has not resigned from the Cabinet.

On Saturday, the Haryana Director General of Police set up a committee after Singh lodged a complaint against the coach, claiming she had tarnished his image. Till the committee gives its report, Singh said, he is handing over his Sports portfolio to the chief minister on moral grounds.

File photo of Haryana Sports Minister Sandeep Singh

He reiterated that the allegations levelled against him by the woman coach are baseless.

"In the matter of complaint made by a lady coach of Haryana against Sports Minister Haryana, a case FIR dated 31.12.2022... has been registered at police station Sector 26, Chandigarh and is being investigated," a Chandigarh police spokesperson said. Singh has been booked under sections 354 (assault or use of criminal force against a woman with intent to outrage her modesty), 354 A (sexual harassment), and other sections of the IPC, he said.

– PTI

India asks Pakistan to release Indian prisoners in its custody

#New Delhi

India on Sunday called on Pakistan to release and repatriate 631 Indian fishermen and two civilian prisoners who have completed their jail-term and whose nationality has been confirmed.

In addition, Islamabad has also been urged to provide immediate consular access to the remaining 30 fishermen and 22 civilian prisoners who have been in Pakistan's custody and are believed to be Indian, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said.

India made the request in the context of the exchange of the lists of civilian prisoners and fishermen by both the countries as part of a practice to do so on January 1 and July 1 of every calendar year under the framework of a 2008 pact.

The MEA said Pakistan has been requested to ensure the "safety, security and welfare of all Indian and believed-to-be Indian civilian prisoners and fishermen, pending their release and repatriation to India".

The MEA said India shared lists of 339 Pakistani civilian prisoners and 95 Pakistani fishermen currently in Indian custody. Similarly, Pakistan has shared lists of 51 civilian prisoners and 654 fishermen in its custody, who are Indians or are believed to be Indians, it added.

"India and Pakistan today exchanged, through diplomatic channels simultaneously at New Delhi and Islamabad, the lists of civilian prisoners and fishermen in their custody," the MEA said in a statement.

– PTI

Hit by car, woman dragged on road for kms dies

#New Delhi

A woman was killed after she was hit by a car and then dragged for a few kilometres on the road, being entangled in the wheels, the police informed on Sunday.

The police said that the condition of the girl after the incident was so bad, that after being dragged on, her clothes and even the back side of her body got ripped off.

Delhi Commission of Women (DCW) chief Swati Maliwal also took cognisance of the matter and issued notice to the Delhi police. "The naked body of a girl was found in Delhi's Kanjhawala, it is being told that some boys in an inebriated state hit her scooty with a car and dragged her for several kilometres. This matter is very dangerous, I am issuing an appearance summons to Delhi Police. The whole truth should come out," she said in a tweet.

Talking to ANI, she also alleged that the five men on the vehicle were drunk. The suspected car was also traced down and the five occupants were apprehended from their houses.

– ANI

Yo-Yo test returns, Dexa added to select Indian team

#HYDERABAD

The Yo-Yo fitness test was on Sunday reintroduced in the eligibility criteria for selection in the Indian cricket team following the high-profile review meeting of the BCCI here.

The meeting, which was pending since India's semi-final exit from the T20 World Cup in November, finally took place in the presence of BCCI secretary Jay Shah, president Roger Binny, captain Rohit Sharma, coach Rahul Dravid, NCA chief VVS Laxman and selector Chetan Sharma.

Besides Yo-Yo test, Dexa (bone scan test) has also been made part of the selection criteria. It was also decided that emerging players, who tend to prioritise white-ball cricket for IPL riches over red ball cricket, will be required to play a "substantial domestic season" to be eligible for national selection.

India's cricketers stretch during a practice session at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong in this December 11 file photo

"The emerging players will have to play a substantial domestic season to be eligible for selection to the national team. "The Yo-Yo Test and Dexa will now be part of selection criteria and implemented in the customized roadmaps of the central pool of players. "Keeping in mind the men's FTP and preparations for ICC CWC 2023, the NCA will work in tandem with the IPL franchisee to monitor the targeted Indian players participating in the IPL 2023," said Shah in the BCCI statement.

The Yo-Yo test is an aerobic endurance fitness test which involves running between markers placed 20 metres apart at increasing speeds.

– PTI

HEALTH TIP: Research shows walking benefits the body in numerous ways including increased flexibility, decreased obesity risk, and improved immunity

When you're consistent with your meal planning, it makes it easier to save money and eat healthier

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Hydration is key!

Healthy ways to stay hydrated if you don't like drinking plain water

Water is an essential nutrient. Our body cannot produce sufficient water to live, so we need to consume water through food and fluids to survive.

Maintaining hydration is one of the most fundamental components of good health. But lots of people don't like drinking plain water much. The good news is there are many other healthy ways to help you stay hydrated.

Why hydration is important

Water is vital for many aspects of body functioning. About half our blood is "blood plasma", which is over 90 per cent water. Blood plasma is essential for carrying energy, nutrients and oxygen to the cells in the body that need it most. Water helps to remove waste products via the kidneys. It also helps keep joints lubricated, the digestive system functioning, the body's temperature controlled and skin plump and strong.

If you don't consume enough water, you may experience symptoms of dehydration such as headaches, dizziness, tiredness, low concentration, constipation and a dry mouth. Being severely dehydrated increases the risk of kidney stones and urinary tract infections.

If you feel thirsty, it means your body is already mildly dehydrated, so make sure you pay attention to what your body is telling you.

How much fluid do you need?

The amount of fluid we need changes as we age. Relative to our body weight, our needs decrease. So, a newborn baby has higher fluid needs (per kilogram body weight) than their parent, and older adults have lower fluid needs than younger adults.

Fluid requirements are related to metabolic needs and vary from person-to-person. The normal turnover of water in adults is approximately 4 per cent of total body weight per day. So, for example, if you weigh 70 kilograms, you'll lose about 2.5 to 3 litres of water a day (not including sweating). This means you will need to consume that amount of water from food and drinks to maintain your hydration.

Eight cups (or two litres) a day is often mentioned as the amount of water we should aim for and a nice way to track your intake. But it doesn't account for individual variation based on age, gender, body size and activity levels.

Alcohol is a diuretic, which means it dehydrates the body by promoting water loss through urine. This fluid loss is a key factor that contributes to the severity of a hangover. Always have a glass of water in between alcoholic drinks to help stay hydrated.

Caffeinated drinks (like tea and coffee) only have a mild diuretic effect. For most healthy adults, it's okay to consume up to 400 mg of caffeine a day – that's about four cups of coffee or eight cups of tea. If you drink more than this, it may impact your hydration levels.

To check your specific requirements, check out the Australian guidelines for fluid intake.

People who should take extra care

Some people are at greater risk of the harmful health effects from dehydration and need to pay special attention to their fluid intake.

The highest priority groups are babies, young kids, pregnant women, and older adults. These groups are at greater risk for many reasons, including relatively higher water needs per kilo of body weight, reduced ability to detect and respond to symptoms of dehydration, and barriers to consuming fluids regularly.

> **Some people are at greater risk of the harmful health effects from dehydration and need to pay special attention to their fluid intake**

Family and friends can play an important role in supporting loved ones to maintain hydration, especially during warm weather.

Ten ideas for keeping fluids up this summer

Download a water reminder app on your phone: This will help keep you on track during the day and give you digital "high fives" when you hit your water goals.

Add sugar-free flavouring: Try a sugar-free fruit infusion in your water to make it more appealing. Prepare a jug in the refrigerator and infuse it overnight so it's chilled for you the next day. Fill it up and take it everywhere with you!

Add some fresh fruit: Add some slices of lime, lemon, berries, pineapple or orange to your water bottle for some natural flavouring. If the bottle is kept in a fridge, the fruit will stay fresh for about three days.

Make a jug of iced tea (not the bottled stuff): There are many great sugar-free recipes online. Tea contributes to fluid intake too. For green and black teas, brew in boiling water then cool overnight on the bench before refrigerating. Fruit teas can be made using cold water immediately.

Add a dash of cordial to your water: A small amount of cordial in your water is a healthier alternative to drinking a sugar-sweetened soft drink or fruit juice. Diet cordials have less added sugar again.

Make a fruit 'slushie': Combine fresh fruit, ice and water at home in the morning and sip to increase your fluid intake for the day.

Buy a soda maker for your home: Some people find plain water tastes better with bubbles. Sparkling mineral water is great too, as long as there is no added sugar or sweeteners.

Before you eat anything, have a glass of water: Make it a rule with yourself to have a glass of water before every snack or meal.

Eat water-rich fruits and vegetables: Many fruits and vegetables have a high water content. Some of the best include berries, oranges, grapes, carrots, lettuce, cabbage, spinach and melons. Keep a container full of cut-up fruit to snack on in your fridge.

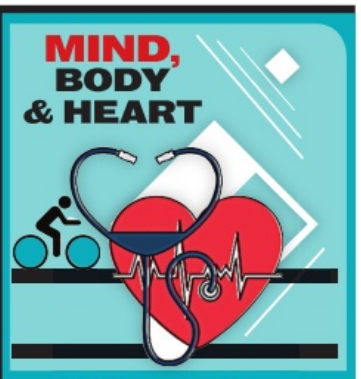
Use a water bottle: Take it with you during the day and keep it by your bed overnight. Infusing water with fruit might make it more appealing. Water bottles are everywhere and sometimes seem to offer emotional support as well as hydration.

Having a water bottle you enjoy using can go a long way in helping you keep up your fluids during the day.

Pay attention to the material of the water bottle and use one that helps you form good habits. Some people prefer metal water bottles as they can keep water cooler for longer (others feel like they are camping). Some prefer glass bottles because the water isn't affected by any flavours from the container (others fear breaking the glass).

Consider the practical aspects, too. Will it fit in your bag? Will it be light enough to carry with you? Can you "chug" on it when you're exceptionally thirsty? Does the lid require screwing? How durable is it in preventing leaks? Do some homework on your water bottle, an essential accessory!

-By Lauren Ball & Emily Burch, The University of Queensland (The Conversation)



All problems solved

Dear Coleen

My partner left me a couple of weeks before Christmas after we had spent six years together.
I didn't see it coming at all and he didn't even offer a proper explanation about why he had ended it, mumbling stuff like "we've run our course" and "the love has gone".
We were living together in my place with my teenage son, who's also upset and confused.
My ex has moved back to his flat, which he kept after moving in with me, and I've now discovered through a friend that he's with someone else.
This new relationship has clearly been going on for a while and is obviously the reason he left me, but he didn't mention it.
I feel so betrayed and humiliated, not to mention stupid for not seeing what he was up to. I'd also been used to two incomes coming into the house, so he's also left me in a difficult situation financially.
He doesn't seem to care, though, and it's as if my son and I meant nothing to him.
How do i move on?

COLEEN SAYS

Look, I won't lie to you, it's not easy to pick up your life and move on from this kind of heartbreak, but you can and you will.
I think he's cowardly for not admitting to his relationship with another woman, and it's horrible for you to find out from someone else.
However, try really hard not to dwell on this relationship and how long it had been going on – you have to be completely selfish now and think about your future.
Take a good look at your finances and maybe even get some professional advice in terms of income and how to budget going forward.
As for the emotional fallout, it just takes time to get over it, but make sure you're leaning on the right people for support and encouragement.

—Coleen Nolan, Daily Mirror

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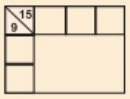
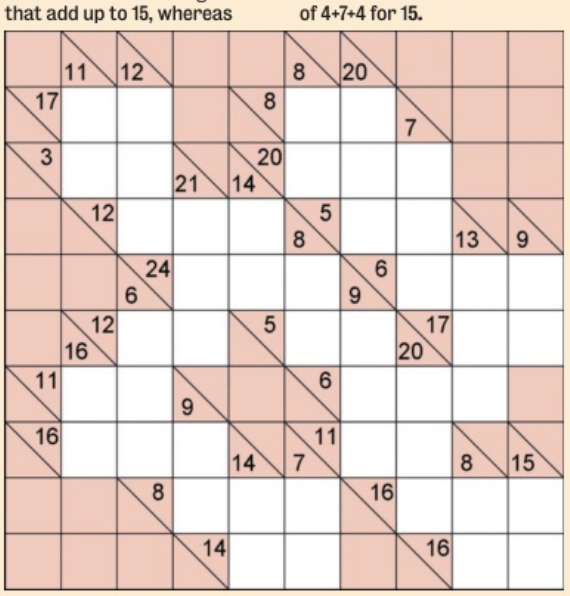
Kakuro

The numbers in the grey squares refer to the sums of the digits that you must fill into the empty spaces directly below or to the right of the grey square containing the number. For instance, in the given example, the 3 boxes horizontally next to 15 must contain 3 digits that add up to 15, whereas

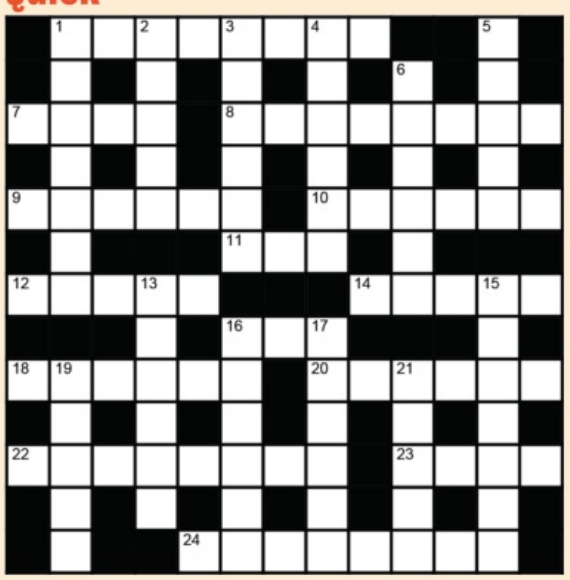


for 9, it is the 2 boxes placed vertically under it that must add up to 9. No zeros are used here, only the digits 1 through 9.

Note: A digit cannot appear more than once in any particular digit combination. For instance, in the example, we cannot have the combination of 4+7+4 for 15.



Quick



ACROSS

1 Stealers of cattle (8)
7 Norwegian capital (4)
8 Escapes (4,4)
9 Small boring tool (6)
10 Pertaining to the famous European mountain range? (6)
11 The sun (3)
12 Moves with a lame walk (5)
14 Opinions or views (5)
16 Supplement (3)
18 Plays for time (6)
20 Method (6)
22 Tipu Sultan's father (5,3)
23 Summit (4)
24 Surprises or astonishes (8)

DOWN

1 Beethoven contemporary (7)
2 Reel or bobbin (5)
3 Illuminates (6)
4 Formal procedure (6)
5 Long for (5)
6 Limited or restricted (6)
13 Young hen (6)
15 Ancient or eternal (7)
16 Tries or attempts (6)
17 Igloo dweller (6)
19 A culinary herb (5)
21 Killed or slaughtered (5)

Quoteuncode

This puzzle is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that Q equals C, it will equal C throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.

Today's CLUE: V EQUALS P

LK HPU UKN, JBB EWOLKUOO DVUQJHLDKO RJK EU QUNWRUN HD HPQUU SDQNO: VUDVBU, VQDNWRH, JKN VQDMLHO.

Linemaro

Beanbags are great. And so are you

Mindchow

In heaven, all the interesting people are missing

Joke of the day

An archeologist is the best husband any woman can have; the older she gets, the more interested he is in her

Loop

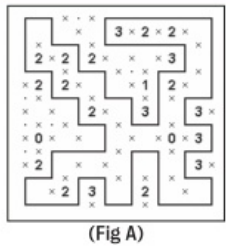
Rules

» Connect adjacent dots with vertical or horizontal lines, creating a single loop (Fig A). » Crossovers or branches are not allowed (As shown by dotted lines in Fig B). » Numbers in the puzzle indicate the number of lines that should surround it, while empty cells may be surrounded by any number of lines. » You can't draw lines around zeros. » Each puzzle has just one unique solution.

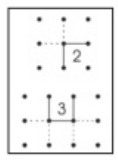
How to begin:

Example (Fig A) – Begin with the zero next to 3. Since no lines can be drawn around zero, mark crosses around it, as shown. Now there is a cross in one space around 3. So we know the three lines of 3 can only be drawn in the remaining three spaces. Next, these lines can only be extended in one direction each. Continue, using the same logic.

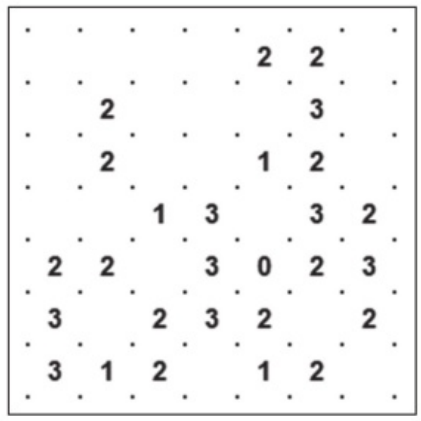
Hints: Keep eliminating possibilities by marking crosses in spaces between dots where a line isn't possible, i.e., if you have already completed required lines or where a line extension may create a branch or cause a dead-end (Fig B)



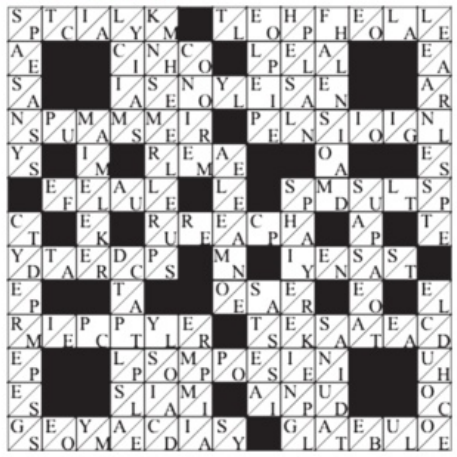
(Fig A)



(Fig B) Not Allowed



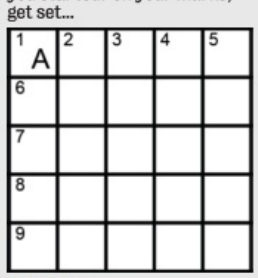
Strikeout



This crossword has no clues and the answer is there waiting for you. All you have to do is find it in each square. You have a choice of two letters, one of which you must strike out. If you choose correctly, you will be left with a grid that contains real words.

Fast five

How long do you think it will take you to unscramble the ten words shown below and fit them correctly into the grid in the order given one letter has already been entered to get you started? on your marks, get set...



ACROSS

1 A cuss; 6 Wines; 7 Dealt; 8 All II; 9 Scalp

DOWN

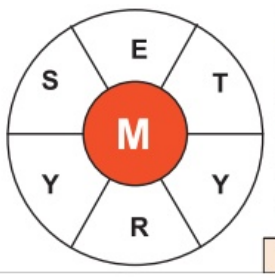
1 Acids; 2 Wells; 3 Iliac; 4 Unapt; 5 Sales

Mensapuzzle

Which number is the odd one out?

6394, 9416, 5278, 6231, 9614, 6132, 7895, 5872, 7598

Bull's eye



How many words of four or more letters can you make from the letters shown? Every word must contain the central letter. There should be one seven-letter word. British English Dictionary is used as a reference.

01 Average; **02** Good; **03** Outstanding

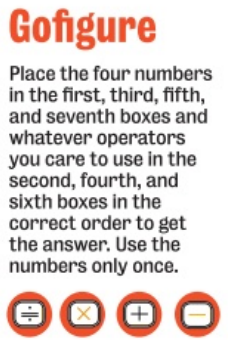
SudokuChallenge

7			5			8		
			6	9		3		4
	5							6
	4					5		9
1			7		8			3
8		5					2	
9							4	
4		1		3	6			
		2			4			7

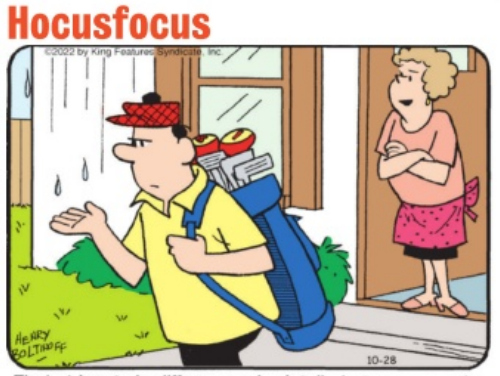
To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from one to nine must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

Gofigure

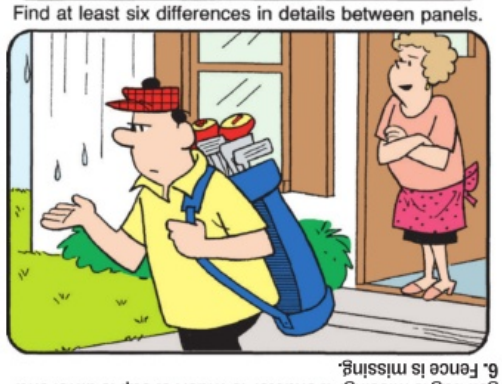
Place the four numbers in the first, third, fifth, and seventh boxes and whatever operators you care to use in the second, fourth, and sixth boxes in the correct order to get the answer. Use the numbers only once.



Hocusfocus



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



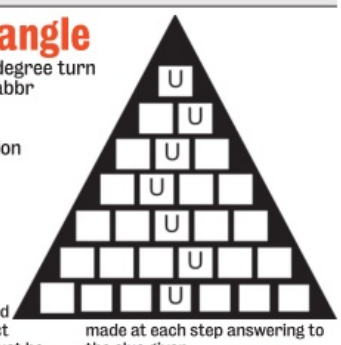
Differences: 1. Arm is moved. 2. Foot is moved. 3. Pocket on golf bag is missing. 4. Shutter is wider. 5. Cap is different. 6. Fence is missing.

Riddler

Rearrange the letter groups to make three Asian countries: NIS, SIA, TAN, ONE, TUR, TAN, BHU, IND, KME.

Alpha triangle

1 Describing a 180 degree turn
2 Delhi University abbr
3 On the way
4 Musical pair
5 Chopin composition
6 Delegate
7 Esteemed



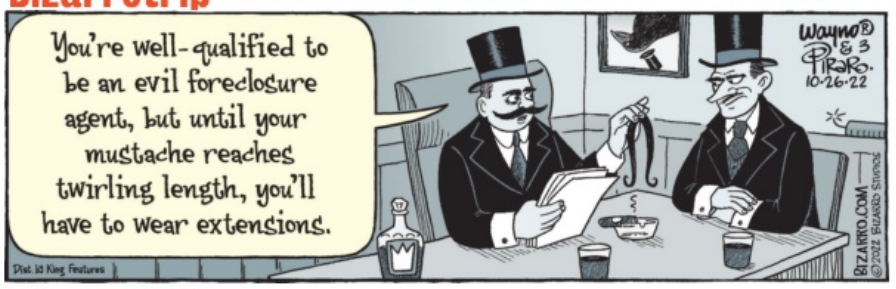
Beginning at the top move towards the bottom seven-letter word by adding a letter at each step and rearranging. A correct and different word must be made at each step answering to the clue given.

DIFFICULT TO SOLVE? FIND THESE SOLUTIONS ON THE NEXT PAGE

COMICS

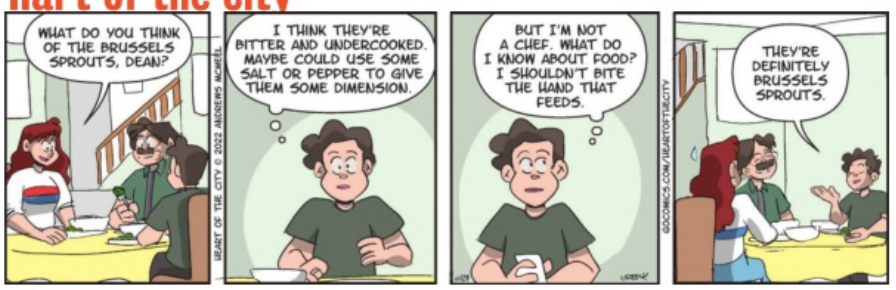
Redeye by Mel Casson

Bizarrotrip



Diamond Lil

Hart of the city



Crankshaft

Mutts

WHAT YOUR STARS SAY TODAY

Aries Mar 21 – Apr 20
Today your elders will help, and you may develop patience. Your focus may come back and will help you achieve your goals. You may perform well in terms of business and domestic life. There may be some balance between expenditure and savings. It may boost your financial health.

Taurus Apr 21 – May 20
Today some dissatisfaction may come into your mind. You may feel lazy and dull, which affects your speed at work. Projects could face delay. Lovebirds are advised to avoid any important decision in terms of marriage. Job-seekers may get disappointments in terms of interviews.

Gemini May 21 – Jun 21
Today your internal power will make you happy. You may get short gains in terms of investments. You can create good relations with your boss. You may see some promotions. Your prestige in society may be increased. You may also expect some work-related travel.

Cancer Jun 22 – July 23
Today you may be blessed by the moon. You may get a high position after your hard work. Your performance at work may be improved. You may also meet some influential person who will give you direction to improve your life. You can manage your domestic issues very easily, which may boost harmony in the family.

Leo Jul 24 – Aug 23
Today you may be happy. Things may somehow be better. You may plan to visit some spiritual place, which may give you inner strength. You may also donate some money to charity or help needy people. You may expect some overseas travel in terms of education or work. Couples may find their match suitable. Singles are likely to find their soulmate.

Virgo Aug 24 – Sep 23
Today you may feel dull. Your health may not be good. You may be arrogant, which may affect people around you. To maintain harmony in domestic life, it is advised to control your harsh way of speaking. Avoid making new investments as they may convert to dead stock.

Libra Sep 24 – Oct 22
Today is a good day for you. Investors may get good gains from investments, which may boost their financial health. Money that was stuck somewhere may be recovered now, increasing liquidity in business. You may become confident and have control over hidden enemies and opponents. Singles will find their match in the same field.

Scorpio Oct 23 – Nov 22
Today you may feel healthy. Old diseases may be cured now. You may hear some good news from your relatives. You may perform well in the office. Your colleague may help you with a critical project. You may develop faith in your subordinate staff. It may increase your prestige among society. You may also hear good news in some legal matters.

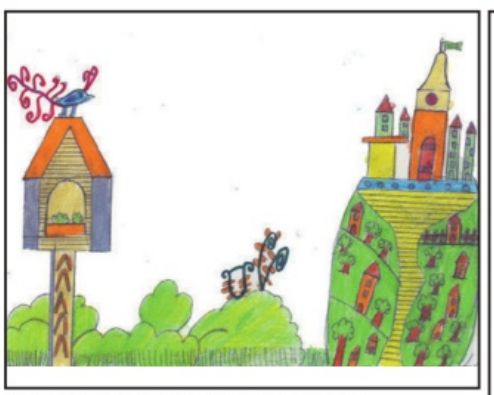
Sagittarius Nov 23 – Dec 22
Today you may feel like your life is getting challenging. You may take some advice from your elders to sustain yourself in a messy situation. You need to keep patience. Children's education can also make you upset. You may need to go for a short trip in terms of their academics. Investors are advised to avoid speculation.

Capricorn Dec 23 – Jan 20
Today you could be a victim of dissatisfaction. You may not get results for your hard work, which may bring disappointment. You are advised to read documents carefully before signing a new contract. Investment in assets may be possible. You are advised to follow your intuition before making investments in fixed assets.

Aquarius Jan 21 – Feb 19
Today you may be busy with social get-togethers and family occasions. It may boost your network. You may also plan for a work-related short trip. Disputes between siblings will be resolved now. Your subordinates may cooperate with you to complete a difficult project. Your confidence may be high. You are advised to keep patience while interacting with any person.

Pisces Feb 20 – Mar 20
Today, you may be busy with family get-togethers. You may become polite with the people around you, which may improve your image among your relatives and friends. You will spend money on buying some artefacts and items which can improve your social status. You may hear some good news from one of your relatives.

KIDZONE



Ravi Sankar I, 9 Years, Modern Public English School

Kidzone, Bangalore Mirror, No.4, KSCCF Compound, Pampa Maha Kavi Road, Chamrajpet, Bengaluru 560 018; Please send hard copies of your artwork in A4 size only.

SOLUTIONS

SOLVE IN 1M

$\left(\frac{1}{4}+\frac{25}{8}\right)^{\frac{1}{2}} \div \frac{3}{2}$

$\left(\frac{27}{8}\right)^{\frac{1}{3}} \times \frac{2}{3}$

$\frac{3}{2} \times \frac{2}{3} = 1$

RIDDLER
Turkmenistan, Bhutan, Indonesia

FAST FIVE

C	L	A	P	S
I	L	I	A	L
D	E	L	T	A
S	W	I	N	E
A	S	C	U	S

BULL'S EYE
MYSTERY, stem, term

STRIKE OUT

S	T	A	L	K		T	O	P	H	O	L	E		
A		I	N	C		P	E	A			A			
S		A	E	O	L	I	A	N			R			
S	U	M	M	E	R		E	N	S	I	G	N		
Y	I		L	E	A		O				E			
C		E	R	E	A	C	H		P		T			
Y	A	R	D	S		M	I	N	S	T				
P		A		O	A	R		E		E				
R	I	P	P	L	E		S	K	A	T	E	D		
E		P	O	M	P	E	I	I		A		U		
S		L	A	M		A	N	D				C		
S	O	M	E	D	A	Y		G	A	B	L	E		

QUICK

R	U	S	T	L	E	R	S		Y					
O		P		I		I		C		E				
S		O		H		U		P		R				
O	S	L	O		G	E	T	S	A	W	A	Y		
G	I	M	L	E	T		A	L	P	I	N	E		
	N			S	O	L		E						
L	I	M	P	S		I	D	E	A	S				
		U		E	K	E								
S	T	A	L	L	S		S	Y	S	T	E	M		
	H		L		S	K		A	P	E	X			
H	Y	D	E	R	A	L	I		A	P	E	X		

Dua Lipa bitten by movie bug

Seems like songstress Dua Lipa is hanging up her microphone and putting on her finest acting face as she plans to conquer the world of moving pictures - and bag herself an Oscar. The 27-year-old chart topping star will make her acting debut in Matthew Vaughn's upcoming spy drama 'Argylle', which co-stars Henry Cavill, Sam Rockwell and Bryce Dallas Howard, reports Mirror.co.uk.

The singer also hopes to investigate the business side of the acting world and produce projects for herself to star in.

An industry source told The Sun, on Sunday: "Dua's received a tonne of scripts and is most interested in taking on serious drama that will receive Oscars buzz.

The insider further said, quoted by Mirror.co.uk: "She wants to really start pursuing acting. She is planning to set up her own TV and film production company so she and her team can option stories she believes in and take them to market with bigger studios."

While little is known about her upcoming project - as 'Argylle' is based on a book that hasn't even been released yet - the star herself has teased her involvement.

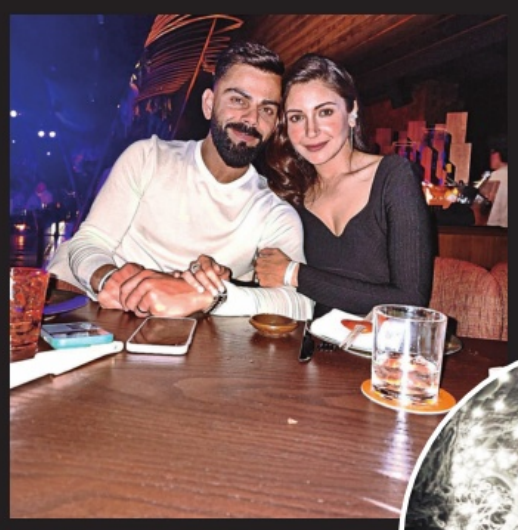
According to Mirror.co.uk, Dua Lipa recently said about filming the spy drama: "It was really exciting. But I think for me it's, like, baby steps."

She continued: "That's also the best way to discover yourself, rather than throwing yourself in the deep end with something that maybe you can't tackle head on."

–IANS

Couple goals on NYE

What's a party if not having a good time with a loved one?



Most B-town celebrities rang in the new year with their loved ones and Athiya Shetty is no different. The actress celebrated the New Year in Dubai with friends and boyfriend KL Rahul. The duo colour co-ordinated in black and looked too happy as they hugged each other and welcomed 2023.

Athiya reshared some pictures posted by her friend on her story, where she can be seen posing with the cricketer.

Meanwhile, Anushka Sharma and Virat Kohli had taken off to Dubai to celebrate New Year. The couple has been dropping mushy glimpses from their vacay and they embraced 2023 in style. Virat shared pictures from their mushy date night and the pictures have love written all over them.

And Malaika and Arjun Kapoor were also on a getaway. Earlier, they posted Instagram stories of the tiger and it looks like they all are together, enjoying the wilderness of Rajasthan jungles!

Vicky Kaushal and Katrina Kaif seemed to have enjoyed the last sunset in the desert! The star couple is, what many fans believe, in Rajasthan. The two have been uploading quite a few pictures from their trip and they look absolutely adorable.

–ETimes

Interconnected life

NAANU ADU MATHTHU SAROJA (KANNADA)

3.0 RATING ★★★☆☆

- **DIRECTOR** Vinay Preetham
- **ACTORS** Yogesh, Apoorva Bharadwaj, Dattatreya, Prerana Kambam, Prasanna Shetty
- **Duration** 123 minutes
- **Certification** UA

This film is about a group of people who are connected with each other due to some peculiar situations. It begins with Pandu (Dattatreya), an elderly man suffering from dementia, trying to end his life. He decides to eat breakfast before ending his life and approaches a roadside tea vendor. At the same time, Deepika (Prerana Kambam) elopes with her lover (Prasanna Shetty), an autorickshaw driver, against her mother's wishes.

The next scene is Pandu noticing Gopi (Yogesh), who suffers from hypersomnia, standing at the same spot where he wanted to end his life. He tries to save him, but ends up injured when an auto rickshaw in which Deepika and her lover are travelling dashes against him. While escaping from there, Deepika leaves her wallet and phone at the spot. Gopi finds a mobile phone in the wallet and sells it to a phone shop owner. Later, Gopi and Pandu decide to get the phone back, but the shop owner sells it to Saroja (Apoorva Bharadwaj), a sex worker. They approach Saroja for the mobile phone. She mistakes them as prospective clients and demands Rs 5,000 but finally realises they want only the phone and not her. Circumstances lead Saroja to share a bed with Gopi in a lodge. What happens to Saroja, Gopi and Pandu is the climax.

Veteran actor Dattatreya's different role will please audiences. His struggle to interact with a sex worker and control a sleepy and naughty young man is a treat to watch. With this movie, Yogesh has proved that he is a director's artiste who can play any role. Apoorva Bharadwaj looks bold and beautiful. Her dialogue delivery and body language are superb. Prerana Kambam, as an innocent girl who is in a terrible hurry to trust her lover, and Prasanna Shetty, as a cunning lover, are convincing.

Prasad Shetty's music is passable. Mahen Simha has done a neat job behind the camera.

Director Vinay Preetham deserves appreciation for conveying the much-needed message to society on the importance of looking after parents rather than giving importance to money.

It is a must watch for Dattatreya and Yogesh's fans.

–Y Maheswara Reddy

Drab treasure hunt

RUDHEERA KANIVE (KANNADA)

2.5 RATING ★★½☆☆

- **DIRECTOR** Samarth M
- **ACTORS** Shobharaj, Sangeetha Anil, Bhavya, Disha Poovaiah, Amrutha V Raj, Karthik, Bala Rajwadi, and Hemanth ST
- **Duration** 128 minutes
- **Certification** UA

Rudheera Kanive's plot revolves around a treasure hunt. One team from Mumbai and another from a village near Rudheera Kanive embark on the hunt for treasure. Sathya, Devu and Arjun are assigned by a corrupt police inspector to find the treasure. The director tells us that the three have their own problems due to which they must accept the assignment. While Karthik wants to earn money to marry his lover, Devu wants money for the treatment of his mother, a visually-challenged person. Both teams meet on the way to Rudheera Kanive to find the treasure. They try to eliminate each other. What happens to them is the climax.

The quality of the movie and poor screenplay leave a lot to be desired. Director Samarth has to go a long way to establish himself as a director in Sandalwood. Most of the sequences look incongruous.

As far as the performances of the actors go, while senior actors such as Shobharaj, Bhavya and Sangeetha Anil have a brief appearance, others fail to stick to the script. It seems that most actors, including Disha Poovaiah, Karthik, and Hemanth, just followed the director without sparing a thought about their future in Sandalwood. It is not clear why the director introduced an item song which is not part of the script.

No one can expect action sequences in this movie to be realistic but they are so over-the-top that the audiences will lose interest fast. The only consolation of the movie is its cinematography.

If you have nothing else to occupy yourself with, you can catch this flick.

–Y Maheswara Reddy